

Museum and Cultural Advisory Board - Meeting Minutes

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular meeting at the Mesa Arts Center, One East Main Street, third floor, south Studios conference room, on May 24, 2012.

Members Present:

Nancy Aposhian
Joe Cooper
Merlin Ellis
Lars Nielson, Jr.
Wesley Ringle
Dr. Robbi Venditti

Members Absent:

Vincent DiBella
Keiko Dilbeck
Natascha Karadsheh
Dr. D. Kent Layton
Pamela Williams

Staff Present:

Cindy Ornstein
Rob Schultz
Kathy Eastman
Jean Kaminski

Lars Nielson, Jr., chair, called the meeting to order at 4:10.

Approval of Minutes

Lars Nielson, Jr., Chair, called for any corrections/additions/deletions to the minutes from the January 26 Board meeting. There being none, Dr. Robbi Venditti made a motion, Merlin Ellis seconded, and the Board members present unanimously approved the minutes of January 26. They appear on the City's webpage.

Public Comments: There was no public present. Cindy Ornstein, Arts and Culture Director, took the time to introduce Kathy Eastman, who was filling in for Tom Wilson and the Arizona Museum of Natural History. Ms. Eastman is the Education Curator at the Museum.

Information and Discussion – Process and Timeline for 2012 Creative Economy Fund – Cindy Ornstein

The Creative Economy Fund guidelines and application form were sent to Board members via e-mail. There were minor changes made to tighten up the language and to distinguish clearly between the Creative Economy Fund grant and the Mesa Arts Center Foundation's ACES program. The timeline is starting earlier this year to give more time to notify applicants of the outcome. Applications went to renters, Founding Residents, internal lists, and an article appeared in the *East Valley Tribune*.

Lars Nielson, Jr., chair, has again agreed to chair the panel as a non-voting panelist. Other panel members are not confirmed at this time. Mr. Ornstein asked if anyone might be interested in being on the panel. Dr. Robbi Venditti and Nancy Aposhian stated they were interested.

Lars Nielson, Jr., chair, asked if all funds were distributed last year. Ms. Ornstein replied that they were. Not all reports are in, but applicants have until July 31 to complete them.

Information – NEA Grant Outcome – Cindy Ornstein

Rob Schultz reported that the Arts and Culture Department was part of a consortium NEA Grant (a consortium grant with the cities of Mesa, Tucson, El Paso and Albuquerque as partners). The four cities are coming together to ask artists to consider the shared challenges of the southwest region (e.g. climate, borders, cultural heritage) and create a work of temporary public art that reflects upon those challenges. The four cities worked together on the grant for \$60,000 (the full amount requested was awarded, which is highly unusual). El Paso is serving as the lead and will serve as the clearinghouse for information and distribution of funds. This is the first multi-state consortium grant awarded by NEA. The grant provides funding for the cities to hire one lead artist for a public art project that will tour to each community. Each city will hire two local artists and the three artists will work collaboratively on developing a community-based public art project, using the theme of Placitas –a traditional community central gathering space. Artist selection will begin by the end of summer.

Cindy Ornstein, Arts and Culture Director, stated that Arts and Culture is excited to be a part of the NEA consortium grant; Mesa Arts Center (MAC) also received their own NEA grant of \$58,000 for the Jazz A – Z program that teaches American history through jazz through professional development workshops for Mesa public school teachers as well as services for students. The grant will allow MAC to continue and expand the program.

Discussion – Discuss ways the Board can Engage with Community – Lars Nielson, Jr.

After a short discussion, it was decided that name badges should be ordered for the Board members, so that when they are at community functions people can identify them, and will be able to approach them and ask questions or provide feedback regarding arts and culture. Board members were once again encouraged to attend opening receptions at the three Museums and to take advantage of other opportunities to speak with citizens when they arise. Other suggestions included

posting the day and time the Board meets in materials as appropriate, directing patrons to the Board's webpage on MAC's front page, and welcoming public comments on the Board's webpage.

Merlin Ellis expressed his concern that the name Museum and Cultural Advisory Board has too many adverbs. He would like to see the name changed in some way to read properly. The Board will discuss possibilities at the next meeting.

Staff Reports

Arizona Museum for Youth – Rob Schultz for Sunnee O'Rork

- Arizona Museum for Youth (AMY) is hosting a VIP reception tonight, May 24, for the "Extreme Pets" exhibit. Board members are invited to attend. The reception is from 5 – 7 p.m.
- Wing It! Things that Fly was a huge success as well as the Atrium.
- Spring Break saw a 132 percent (%) increase in attendance over last year, with 1,861 attending.
- Tour revenue for "Wing It" was double over Warner Bros., Peanuts, Jump to Japan, and the NASA exhibits.
- Jeffery Morris, Museum Curator, celebrated five years with AMY.
- AMY has 1,539 member families – 34% higher than this time last year.
- AMY's Image for the Future program, funded through a Virginia G. Piper grant, is now in Phase II & III – the name, brand and marketing strategy phase – to be unveiled in June 2013.
- Phase I included a survey which concluded that exhibitions was the number one reason why people visited AMY and number two was ArtVille; a higher rate of interaction between adults and children than other museums; and fun of learning and creative experiences at AMY. Sunnee O'Rork, Museum Administrator, wanted to thank Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust for their support of the Image for the Future program as well as the City of Mesa; Cindy Ornstein, Arts and Culture Director; and partners, Arizona Museum of Natural History, Mesa Arts Center, Mesa Parks & Rec., the Children's Museum of Phoenix, and the Desert Botanical Garden.
- AMY received a \$50,000 Organizational Enhancement Grant from the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust to start a Traveling Exhibition Business. This is a follow-up opportunity from the Piper Trust Fellowship that allowed Ms. O'Rork to travel to museums across the country to see how they operated their traveling exhibitions. Traveling Exhibits will be a new stream of revenue for the Museum.

Cindy Ornstein commented that building a Traveling Exhibition Program will provide efficiencies, because the Museum creates their own exhibitions in-house, and those designs can be replicated to travel.

Ms. Ornstein commented that previously AMY's audience was thought to be mothers bringing their children for the sake of the children. Through the branding research, they discovered that the audience included adults both alone and with children who are curious people wanting to learn something for themselves, teach their children and share experiences with their children.

Arizona Museum of Natural History – Kathy Eastman for Tom Wilson

- The Museum of Natural History (AzMNH) celebrated their 35th birthday last Friday, May 18; approximately 3,200 were counted coming through the door, not sure how many including those outside. Volunteers started the Museum and volunteers remain a strong influence in the success of the Museum today. On the day of the birthday celebration, the Museum offered a one-time membership of \$35 and sold 80 memberships that day.
- The Museum will host Prehistoric Preschool for ages 4 and 5 in June; a four-day, "Rulers of the Prehistoric Land, Sea, and Sky," camp July 9 – 12 for ages 6, 7, and 8, from 9 a.m. – noon and ages 9, 10, 11, and 12, from 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.; and the Museum will host an overnight on July 13. Ms. Eastman commented that it is difficult to engage teens, but the Museum has started using the teens as volunteers for the summer programs; they become involved and they learn something in the process.
- Proposals to construct the Welcome Center at Mesa Grande have gone out for bid. The City allocated the remaining Arts and Cultural Impact Fees Fund amount to the construction of the Welcome Center. The Museum has identified other sources of revenue to complete the project.
- The Museum is working on a couple of new exhibits – from the Abe Hays Collection an exhibit on the art of Carl Oscar Borg, the first exhibition of his work, and one on the geology of the Grand Canyon.

Mesa Arts Center/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Rob Schultz

- Rob Schultz reported that in June, he will attend the annual Americans for the Arts conference in San Antonio. The three other cities that are part of the consortium grant will be there, so, there will be opportunities for informal conversations on implementing the grant project. Americans for the Arts is the national umbrella organization that represents many of the local arts agencies and arts councils across the country with approximately 5,000 members.

One of the sub-committees of Americans for the Arts is the Arts Education Council. Mesa has representation on that council through Rob's membership.

- Mesa Contemporary Arts (MCA) is hosting a reception for their new exhibits based on metals on Friday, May 25. Metals are featured in these exhibits because the Society of North American Goldsmiths is having a conference in Phoenix, and attendees will be bussed to MCA for the opening and reception.
- Planning is underway for the 2012 Festivals. The Season Kickoff, Fire & Ice, will be held on September 14. Four of MCA's exhibits at that time will be of glass artwork. In one gallery, there will be an exhibition of photographs by Bob Carey, a photographer. When his wife was diagnosed with breast cancer and, after recovery, went into remission, they traveled across county and captured pictures of him in a pink tutu. He uses these photographs to promote breast cancer awareness. MCA planned an event to raise awareness and funds for breast cancer research during the month of October, and to generate publicity for the exhibition. On October 2 (Tutu Tuesday), MAC will go pink. Staff and any one in the community who would like to participate will be wearing a pink tutu, and will stage a large community photo event. MAC will have tutus available for people to wear for the photo for a contribution to breast cancer research.
- The 6th Annual Day of the Dead Celebration is planned for October 27 and 28; the annual Mesa Arts Festival is December 8 and 9; and the Mesa Festival of Creativity is March 13–17, 2013.
- Light Rail groundbreaking ceremony is May 30 on the corner of Robson and Main Street.

Dr. Robbi Venditti asked if MCA would be hosting the 10 x 10 this year. Mr. Schultz replied that it would take place on October 10 again this year; more details will come later.

Director's Report – Cindy Ornstein

The Performing Live season launched to members in May. The season includes returning acts such as Bill Cosby, Lang Lang, and Paula Poundstone along with some new performers, such as 2 Cellos and LeAnn Rimes. Other performers include the comedy of Greg Proop and Mike Birbiglia; a brilliant theater piece called Word Becomes Flesh; the 55th Anniversary Tour of Monterey Jazz Festival, Pat Metheny, and a wide variety of other performers. Since the launch, four new performers have been added that include: William Shatner: Shatner's World; the Moody Blues with four original band members; Taj Mahal with Shemikia Copeland; and Nathan Pacheco.

Since tickets went on sale, MAC has received over \$194,000 in ticket sales. That revenue number does include a few shows that were on sale prior to the launch that received approximately \$80,000 in revenue sales. From member sales alone, MAC has received over \$100,000 in ticket sales.

MAC received a grant from the Flinn Foundation to work in partnership with Arizona PBS to create a series of short documentary videos about our outreach, education, and access programs. The mini-documentaries will air at on the PBs Arizona Horizon program as part of Arizona Artbeat. The first one, on the Mesa Festival of Creativity, aired on Thursday, May 24; the second on the residency of Contra Tiempo Urban Dance Company will air on June 14; the third airs on June 28 on the Mesa Takes Flight community-based dance piece, and the fourth airs on July 19 on the Jazz from A-Z program, PBS will package the four mini-documentaries into a 30-minute program which will air on PBS in September.

Marketing created a piece, *Summer Arts & Science Education for Kids*, to promote summer education programs at the three Arts and Culture institutions (MAC, AzMNH, and AMY).

Ms. Ornstein shared information about the pilot program "Eats & Arts." Restaurants that participated in the program provided some kind of discount when you present a ticket from a MAC performance. You need to use it within a week of the performance and each restaurant offers a different discount. MAC will continue the Eats & Arts program and the Museums will also participate. The program is a win/win as a benefit to MAC and Museum patrons, downtown Mesa and the restaurants.

Mesa Festival of Creativity – This festival is, in part, about creative experimentation – people being able to tear down their fears and give artists an opportunity to take a risk. The Festival is a work in progress. We learned from last year that 10 days is too long, so next year it will be five days. We also learned that having something in the south parking lot made the festival too spread out, so it will be less spread out next year. We are also looking at the name – we believe that the name might have effected people's interest in the festival, so next year we would like to find a one-word name that would intrigue people and make them curious enough to come and see (keeping the festival of creativity in a sub-head). Ms. Ornstein distributed various options being considered, and received feedback from the Board on the possible names.

Joe Cooper asked if the festival would continue down Main Street. Ms. Ornstein responded saying that it will take time for the festival to grow, although we hope to eventually expand down Main Street. Right now, it is located on MAC campus only. She continued saying that we are engaging businesses in downtown to become a partners in the meantime. Ms. Ornstein would like to see the festival become rooted in community ownership with organizations/groups having the opportunity to become involved and help generate programming.

Report on Conferences and/or meetings/Performances Attended: Board Members – Information only

Dr. Robbi Venditti asked if MAC saw any increase in ticket sales from the TV “donut” ads. Ms. Ornstein replied that MAC had a successful year for revenue and received great anecdotal comments on programming that are useful when applying for grants. The Museums also had good revenue and attendance numbers to date. The three Arts & Cultural facilities are ahead of projected revenue for the year.

Dr. Venditti attended the Arizona Museum of Natural History’s birthday celebration and the debate at MAC in February.

Nancy Aposhian said she took her family to the “Wing It” opening at Arizona Museum for Youth – they found it informative and loved the interactives.

The next scheduled meeting date is July 26, 2012, 4:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Ornstein, Director
Arts and Culture Department